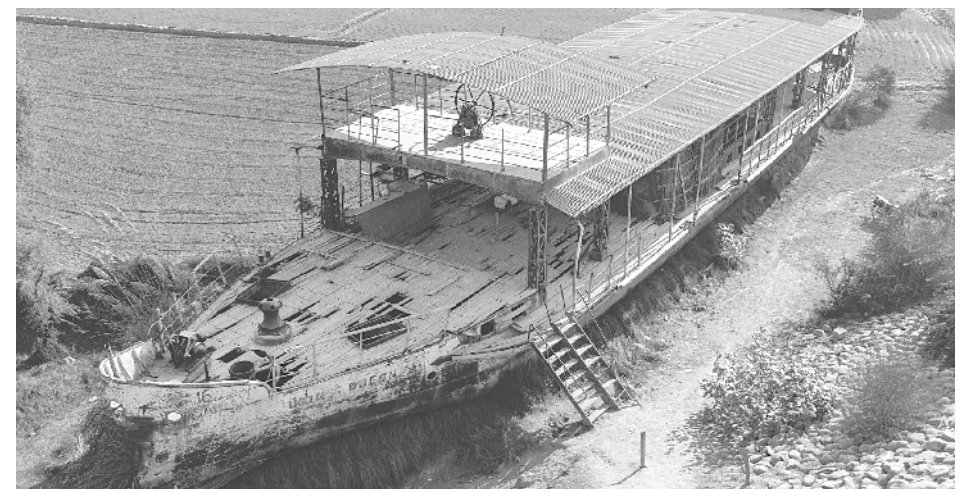
Heritage lovers call for restoring rusting Indus Queen

By Majeed Gill

A replica of Indus Queen on the lawns of Noor Mahal.



The skeleton of the ship at Mithan Kot.

BAHAWALPUR: The heritage and culture lovers, including intellectuals, scholars and former members of Bahawalpur Museum's defunct board of governors have reiterated their demand for relocation of the Indus Queen to the Bahawalpur Museum for its preservation and exhibition for the public.

Over a century-old Indus Queen's skeleton is presently rusting near Kot Mithan along the deserted place of the Indus River.

Dawn learnt that during the past few years, some measures were taken by former South Punjab Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Saqib Zafar and former Commissioner Raja Jahangir Anwar to shift its skeleton to the museum but the task could not be completed during their tenures. As a result, the Indus Queen is still rotting near Kot Mithan.

Raja Anwar, in his capacity as the chief of the then BoG of Bahawalpur Museum, had sent the board's former members' delegation to the ship to examine the possibility of shifting its wreckage to Bahawalpur. But after the transfers of Mr Anwar and Mr Zafar from Bahawalpur, the earlier proposal was not implemented, raising the heritage lovers' concerns.

Dawn learnt from historic facts that the steamer, Indus Queen, was built in 1867 by Thomas Reid & Sons in the port city of Paisley, Scotland. It was commissioned by Nawab of Bahawalpur Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi-IV and was used for transportation of the royal family when the river Sutlej was in full swing and flowed near the city. Initially, it was named as the Sutlej Queen with reference to the River Sutlej.

The three-story ship had separate male and female sections and could accommodate 400 guests at a time . However, after the Partition of India in 1947 and signing of the Indus Waters Treaty between Pakistan and India during the dictatorial regime of Gen Ayub Khan, the River Sutlej started drying up as its water was given to India. Nawab Sadiq Abbasi-V shifted the steamer to the river Indus and was renamed as the Indus Queen.

The late Nawab gifted the ship to the devotees of poet Khawaja Ghulam Farid of Koth Mithan Sharif for their transportation from Kot Mithan to Chachran Sharif in Rahim Yar Khan district. Once, the ship caught fire that badly damaged it, making it unserviceable. After the construction of Ghazi Ghat Bridge, the Indus Queen was docked. Presently, it is in a ruined condition at Kot Mithan in the Rajanpur district.

It is amusing for thousands of visitors of historical Noor Mahal that the Pak Army, custodian of the Noor Mahal, had sometime back installed the replica of Indus Queen on the lawns of the palace. The replica has also three storeys with a restaurant at it second floor , which is opened for the general public. The palace's caretakers also hold light and sound shows at Noor Mahal for the entertainment of visitors.

The heritage lovers think that the Indus Queen lying is the heritage of the State of Bahawalpur and that it should be shifted back and preserved at the Bahawalpur Museum for future generations. In a meeting here the other day, they drew the attention of Punjab Archives, archaeology department and Commissione, Musarrat Jabeen to the Indus Queen and appealed for its shifting to Bahawalpur for preservation for future generations.

Some years back, the antique steam engine was shifted from Panjnad Headworks for exhibition on the premises of Bahawalpur Museum where it attracts a large number of visitors. This steam engine was used to transport stones, iron bars and girders and other construction material to build the Panjnad Headworks.

The Bahawalpur Museum has already preserved treasures of hundreds of artefacts of Chiolistan desert in addition to the late Nawab' s vintage vehicles and buggies.

Gujranwala teaching hospital MS, principal removed

LAHORE: Acting on a direction of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Chief Minister's Inspection Team conducted a surprise visit to the Gujranwala Teaching Hospital on Sunday and removed the Medical Superintendent (MS) and Principal over serious administrative lapses.

"On the instructions of the chief minister, special assistant (to the chief minister) Shoaib Mirza dispatched a special inspection team to the hospital to assess the situation and review service delivery," says an official handout.

During the visit, the inspection team examined various departments of the Gujranwala Teaching Hospital and interacted with patients and their attendants to obtain first-hand feedback. Several patients and attendants complained about

mismanagement, particularly delays and irregularities in the provision of medicines.

"Following the findings of the inspection team and the complaints received from patients, the newly appointed MS and principal were removed from their positions for failing to ensure proper administrative control and patient care," it said. In a bid to improve service delivery and strengthen good governance, the chief minister has activated the CMITs across the province to ensure effective monitoring of public sector institutions. The teams are submitting regular reports to the CM, while a dedicated digital dashboard has also been made functional to enable real-time monitoring.

"On the directives of the CM, inspection teams are conducting inspections of hospitals to ensure the provision of free medicines and healthcare facilities to patients. Any negligence or shortcomings in service delivery are being identified promptly for corrective action," the handout reads.

The inspection teams will soon extend monitoring to education departments and other government institutions.

TOBA TEK SINGH: Dog owners participate in a dog show organised at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). More than 300 dogs from across the country participated in the competition. — Dawn

Furniture factory gutted by blaze

By Our Correspondent

GUJRAT: A furniture factory was burnt down after a fire broke out early on Sunday morning in the Sada Chak area along the Shahdaula Road.

As per details, a huge quantity of wood was stored inside the factory which caught fire due to unknown reasons. However, no human loss was reported as the fire and smoke engulfed the area.

Rescue 1122 teams reached the spot and started an operation to extinguish the fire at around 8am with five fire engines, while a dozen officials participated in the operation. The operation continued for more than two hours, after which the fire was extinguished.

Rescue officials said that the fire had engulfed a large hall inside the factory which had no ventilation. The officials said that this made the operation difficult and time-consuming. They said that some 32,000 liters of water was used in the operation.

Two injured suspects held with large quantity of drugs

By Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: Karampur police, Vehari district, claimed on Sunday to have arrested two alleged drug smugglers in injured condition after an 'encounter', recovering charas and opium worth hundreds of thousands of rupees from their vehicle near Pull Sahoo.

According to Mailsi DSP Saeed Ahmed Sial, police at a picket at Pul Sahoo signalled a vehicle occupied by three suspects to stop. However, the suspects opened fire on the police, leading to crossfire between the two sides.

The DSP claimed that during the crossfire, one of the suspects fled the scene while the two others, later identified as Mohsin Ali and Ali Raza, suffered bullet injuries and were arrested.

On searching the vehicle, the police recovered 149kg charas and 15kg opium, he said.

He said that the suspects were on their way to Vehari to deliver the narcotics consignment to peddlers.

They were shifted to hospital, while their vehicle was impounded and a case against their fleeing accomplice was registered, the DSP added.

The police said that the suspects would be interrogated to extract information about their network in Vehari and other parts of the district.

FIA RAID: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), during a raid in Kahrorpucca tehsil of Lodhran district, arrested a device operator and his three accomplices for making illegal deductions from the Benazir Income Support (BISP) amounts meant for deserving women.

According to the FIA, they got a tip-off that a device operator, Sheheryar, who ran a general store on Railway Road, was making illegal deductions from the BISP amounts.

Acting on the information, an FIA team raided the shop and caught the suspect red-handed and recovered Rs100,000 from his pocket.

On the suspect's identification, the FIA also arrested his three accomplices - Qasim, Nadeem Riaz and Qasim Malik.

IUB: The Islamia University, Bahawalpur (IUB) has established a Prime Minister Youth Development Centre (PMYDC) here to help students learn different skills.

According to an IUB press release, inaugurating the centre, IUB Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Kamran said that IUB was playing a proactive role in providing students with opportunities for skill development, creativity and civic engagement.

He noted that PMYDC will act as a catalyst for student-led initiatives, fostering a culture of innovation and responsible leadership.

The VC appointed Prof Dr Najia Saher, chairperson, artificial intelligence (AI) department and Faisal Shahzad as PMYDC ambassadors.

On the occasion, Prof Dr Saher said that the centre will serve as a hub for innovation, guidance and inclusive opportunities for students, particularly the women, across various disciplines.

Three brothers electrocuted

By Our Correspondent

SARGODHA: Three brothers were electrocuted when they touched an 11kV high voltage transmission line while working on the roof of a house in Talib Colony on Sunday.

According to sources, Sajid Masih (25) was working on a roof of a house when an iron rod he was holding touched the wires passing over the roof. His two brothers, Abid Masih (29) and Asif Masih (38), came to save him and all three of them were electrocuted.

KILLED: Two persons were killed and four were injured in exchange of fire between two groups at Noon Jangir village near Shahpur over a TikTok video.

According to sources, an argument broke out between the young boys over a video uploaded on TikTok, which later escalated and an exchange of fire between two groups resulted in the instant death of Masood Kundan. Another man succumbed to bullet injuries in the hospital while four people, including two brothers, were injured. They were admitted to the DHQ Hospital Sargodha .

In another incident, a man was killed while his two brothers were injured in the suburbs of Mitha Tiwana Khushab, Canal Bridge Jabi.

A verbal dispute broke out between Haider Khan, Pathan and Mewa Khan Pathan the other day. Today, one of Mewa Khan's brothers, Shaista Khan, was killed and his two brothers, Alam Khan and Feroz Khan, were injured during an exchange of fire between the two groups.

ROBBERY: Two robbers robbed a shopkeeper of million rupees at gunpoint.

According to a police report, Rizwan, a shopkeeper, was coming to his house in J-Block Istiqlalabad at around 10pm when two armed robbers on a motorcycle chased him and snatched cash from him at gunpoint.

The Factory Area Police Station reached the spot with a heavy contingent and registered a case.

Shopkeeper killed by disgruntled ex-employee

By Our Correspondent

TOBA TEK SINGH: A shopkeeper was killed after a disgruntled former employee allegedly opened fire on him in the Diglispura area of Faisalabad on Sunday.

Accused Muhammad Umar was reportedly angry over getting fired by shop owner Muhammad Shan (40) and he shot and killed him, while a passerby identified as Muhammad Suhail (34) was also seriously wounded in the attack.

The Jhang Bazaar Police were conducting raids to arrest the accused.ENCOUNTER: Two alleged robbers were arrested in injured condition by the Roshanwala Police of Faisalabad in the wee hours of Sunday.

Police claimed that Roshanwala SHO Inspector Shahid Pervez signalled four suspicious persons to stop at a checkpoint at Kajle Morr. Police claimed the men opened fire on the police party and fled towards Chak 236 RB. The police claimed to nab two of the suspected robbers after an exchange of fire in injured condition. Police said their two other accomplices managed to escape.

Police said the injured suspects were identified as Imran alias Asif Mani and Ali Raza. Police shifted them to the Allied Hospital. Police claimed that both men were declared as proclaimed offenders by courts in a number of dacoity cases.

TRAINING: An on-farm training programme on the complete cycle of poultry processing technology and a day-long seminar on technologies driving efficiency in poultry processing was organised by the University of Agriculture Faisalabad Constituent College Toba Tek Singh in collaboration with UAF ORIC.

The event was held at the SABROSO Poultry Processing Plant, Sheikhupura.

A press release said that the training and seminar aimed to enhance the practical knowledge and technical skills of poultry science students by providing them with hands-on exposure to modern poultry processing practices, quality assurance systems, and efficiency-driven industrial technologies.

The seminar featured talks by Dr Khalid Javed, Dr Muhammad Farooq Khalid, Dr Umar Farooq, Dr Riaz Mustafa, and Dr Muhammad Auon. They shared valuable insights into advancements in poultry processing technologies, quality management systems, and innovative strategies to improve operational efficiency. They also emphasised the importance of strong academia–industry linkages for sustainable growth of the poultry sector.

FUNERAL: Scores of people attended the funeral prayers of renowned poet Rai Imtiaz Ahmad Farooq at the Kot Khaira graveyard on Sunday.

He died on Saturday night at the age of 75 due to cardiac arrest in Kamalia. He was the author of a number of poetry books. **BOOKED:** The Mamukanjan Police booked 17 persons for allegedly dismantling the link road leading to a poultry farm of an overseas Pakistani.

Complainant Haji Ashiq Rasool of Chak 508 GB claimed in his FIR that accused Muhammad Afzal of his village and his 16 accomplices ploughed the road with a tractor in violation of a stay order issued by a court. No arrests have been made so far.

PARKING FACILITY: As many as 110 notified parking points across Faisalabad will be established for providing organised and convenient parking facilities for citizens.

It was decided at a meeting on Sunday with Commissioner Raja Jahangir Anwar in the chair.

The commissioner said that road markings, signboards and single lane parking along with uniform parking charges should be ensured at existing sites and a comprehensive report should be prepared for the establishment of new parking sites. He clarified that there was no scope for illegal parking except at the notified points of the parking company.

The meeting was also briefed on the steps for installing jersey barriers at u-turns and bridges to prevent accidents on the Canal Road.

INVESTIGATION: Jhang DPO Bilal Iftikhar Kiani has formed a nine-member team headed by SP (Investigation) Rana Rehman Qadir to investigate the attack on PTI Central Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram's brother Sheikh Fawad.

The team also includes DSPs of the City Circle and Saddar Circle, Saddar SHO Akhlaq Noel and City Police SHO Amanullah Qamar.

RAPIST HELD: A youth was arrested on Sunday by the Gulberg Police for allegedly raping a girl.

The complainant claimed that the accused befriended his 23-year-old daughter through social media and on Dec 10 he lured her to a local cafe near the Dhobi Ghat. There, he claimed that he not only raped her but also recorded her video and was now blackmailing her by threatening to post the video on social media.